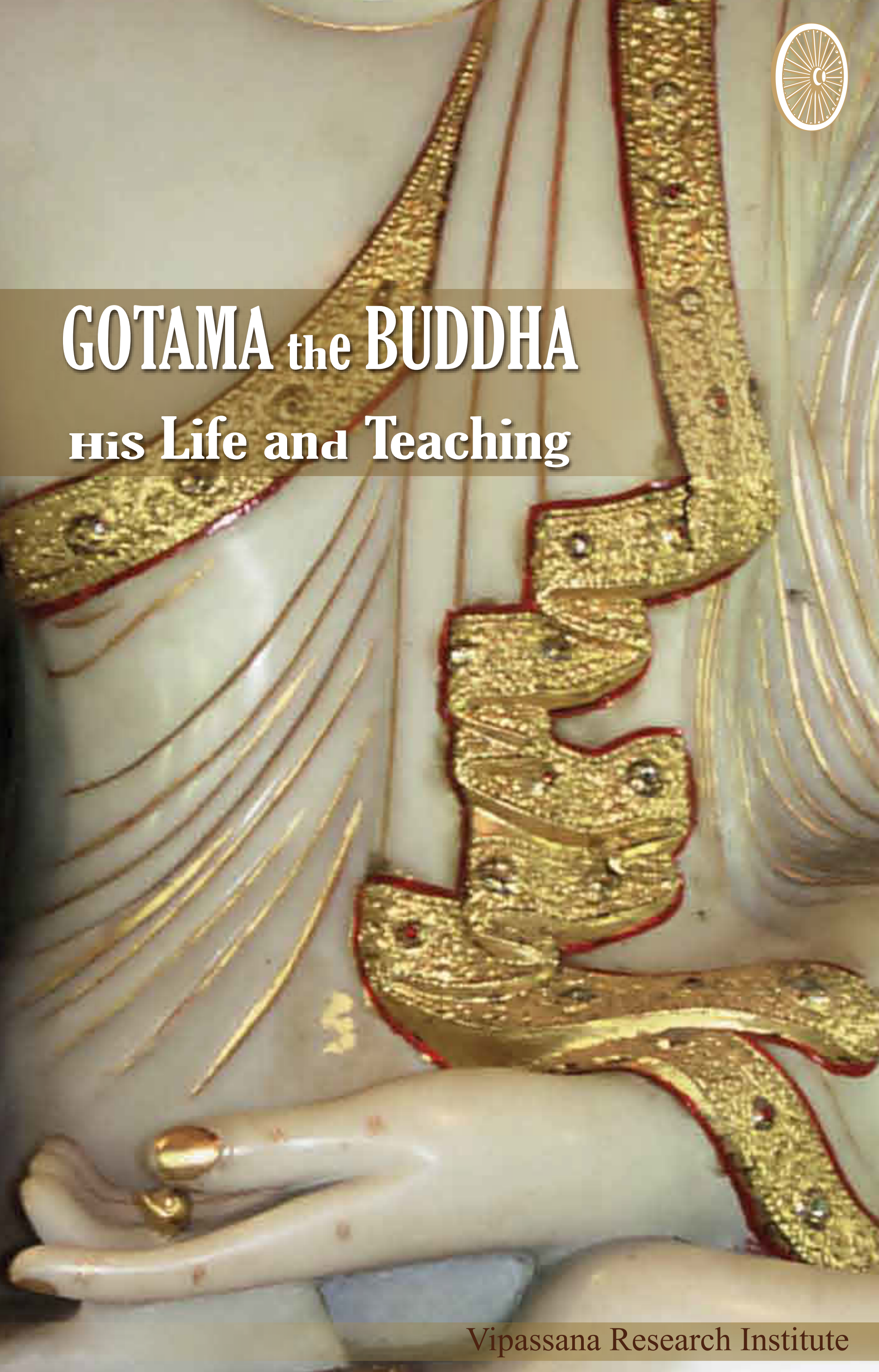


# GOTAMA the BUDDHA

## His Life and Teaching

Vipassana Research Institute

# Vipassana Research Institute

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May all beings be happy.

# Gotama the Buddha:
## His Life and Teaching

**Vipassana Research Institute**
**Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri**

Gotama the Buddha: His Life and Teaching,
First Published as *Gotama Buddha and The Dhamma*
by Vipassana Research Institute, 1988

Second Edition : 1992
Reprinted : 1997, 1999, 2000, 2008, 2009
Third Revised Edition : 2011
Reprint : 2012

ISBN 978-81-7414-128-6

**Price: Rs.**

**Published by:**
**Vipassana Research Institute**
Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403
Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India
Tel: [91] (2553) 244076, 244086, 243712,
243238; Fax: [91] (2553) 244176
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Website : www.vridhamma.org

**Printed by:**
**Apollo Printing Press**
G-259, SICOF Ltd., 69 MIDC, Satpur,
Nashik-422007, Maharashtra

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# *THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA*

Sixth century B.C. was an important era in history. This was the period when a great benefactor of mankind was born and became renowned as Gotama the Buddha. The Buddha rediscovered the path of Dhamma leading to the eradication of universal suffering. With great compassion he spent forty-five years showing the path and this helped millions of people to come out of their misery. Even today this path is helping humanity, and will continue to do so provided the teachings and practice are maintained in their pristine purity.

History tells us that in 624 B.C. King Suddhodana ruled the kingdom of Sākya. He had two queens: the chief queen was Mahāmāyā and the younger queen was Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, the sister of Mahāmāyā. When Mahāmāyā was travelling from Kapilavatthu, the capital, to Devadaha, her parents' home, to have her first child, she gave birth along the way to a son under a large sāla tree in the Lumbinī grove on the full moon day of Vesākha (month of April-May). An old sage, Asita, visited the palace, and on seeing the marks of greatness (*mahāpurīsa lakkhaṇa*) in the child, first expressed joy and then shed tears. He was joyful at seeing that a great being

had come to earth to teach suffering humanity how to eradicate its misery, yet he shed tears because he would not live long enough to be able to benefit from this.

Five days after the birth the name-giving ceremony was held to which a number of brāhmans were invited. All, except Koṇḍañña, foretold: either the child would be a great Emperor (*Cakkavatti Rājā*) or an Enlightened One, a Buddha. Koṇḍañña, however, said quite decisively that the boy would be a Buddha. The boy was given the name of Siddhattha, meaning one whose aim is accomplished.

Just seven days after the birth, Queen Mahāmāyā passed away and the young Siddhattha Gotama (Gotama being his family name) was then raised by his stepmother Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. As he grew, the young prince preferred solitude and a meditative life to the games and pranks natural for his age. This was observed by his father who, fearing the prophecy, tried his best to divert the attention of the young Siddhattha towards worldly things, while at the same time shielding him from the sight of any worldly suffering.

At the young age of sixteen, Siddhattha was married to Yasodharā, a beautiful princess. It was his father's hope that she would bind him to the family life. Until the age of twenty-nine he lived the life of a householder amidst great luxury and ease.[1]

One day, as Siddhattha was going out in his chariot, he saw along the way a decrepit old man, then a sick man, then a dead body, and finally an ascetic radiating with a glow of peace and tranquillity on his face. These four incidents made a distinct impression on him. He began

reflecting on the misery inherent in existence; at the same time he felt drawn to renounce the world and seek a way of liberation.

When Prince Siddhattha and Princess Yasodharā bore a son, Siddhattha saw the event as a bondage and decided to call the child Rāhula, meaning an obstacle. Ultimately, however, the child did not prove to be a bondage, as Siddhattha thought it better to renounce the worldly life before his attachment grew stronger. He decided to adopt the life of a wanderer in quest of truth. One night, he left the palace along with his attendant Channa. After going some distance he discarded his royal robes and ornaments, giving them to Channa, and then cut off his hair and became an ascetic. He was twenty-nine years of age.

For six years he wandered in search of truth. First he met the spiritual teachers Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, and learned from them deep absorption concentrations (the seventh and eighth *jhānas*) that were practised at that time. Despite this practice Siddhattha wasn't satisfied. Although his mind was more calm and peaceful, and now purified to a great extent, still at the deepest level of his mind there remained latent defilements. His mind was not totally pure.

At this stage in his search he proceeded to Senānigāma in Uruvelā. There he practised rigorous austerities along with five other mendicants—the *pañcavaggiya bhikkhus*. By fasting he was reduced to a mere skeleton, yet total purification still eluded him. As a result of all these experiences he realised that as the life of ease and physical luxury was one extreme and not the way to eradicate suffering, so also the life of physical torture and severe

penance was another extreme. This realisation brought him to the middle path. He decided to take food again. One day in the morning when he was sitting under a Banyan tree Sujata of the nearby village offered him rice cooked in milk (Khir) thinking him to be the tree deity. She had come to her father's house to fulfil her vow she had made in her young age to worship the Banyan Tree deity and offer him rice cooked in milk as she had been well married and blessed with a son. At this point his five companions left him, as they were still convinced that the path of self-mortification led to enlightenment.

Siddhattha continued on alone. On the full moon day of Vesākha (April-May), after refreshing himself in the Nerañjarā River, he was drawn towards a pleasant grove of trees. There he sat down with a strong determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*) not to leave until attaining enlightenment.[2] He spent that night in deep meditation, exploring the truth within, and rediscovered the long-lost technique of *vipassanā*.

Vipassana means to see things as they really are, and not just as they appear to be. In the *Brahmajāla Sutta* he states how he practised this to achieve enlightenment:

> Having experienced as they really are the arising of sensations, their passing away, the relishing of them, the danger in them, and the release from them, the Enlightened One, O monks, has become detached and liberated.[3]

Practising Vipassana, he penetrated the veils of ignorance, delusion, and illusion. He discovered the law of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), the chain of cause and effect conditioning the universe.[4] Whatever

arises, arises due to a cause; when the cause is eradicated there can be no resulting effect. Therefore, by totally eliminating the cause of suffering one can attain real happiness, real liberation from all misery. With this realisation, he penetrated the illusion of solidity in mind and matter, dissolved the tendency of his mind to cling and crave, and realised the unconditioned truth. The darkness of ignorance was dispelled and the light of wisdom shone forth in all its brilliance. The subtlest defilements of his mind were washed away. All the shackles were broken. No craving remained for the future; his mind became free from all attachments. Siddhattha Gotama attained supreme enlightenment, experiencing the ultimate truth in all its purity, and became a *Sammāsambuddha*. The tree under which he sat became known as the Bodhi tree and the area as Bodhagayā.

With the experience of total liberation the following words of joy (*udāna*) came forth:

> *Anekajātisaṃsāraṃ sandhāvissaṃ anibbisaṃ,*
> *gahakārakaṃ gavesanto dukkhā jāti punappunaṃ.*
> *Gahakāraka diṭṭho'si puna gehaṃ na kāhasi,*
> *sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā gahakūṭaṃ visaṅkhitaṃ,*
> *visaṅkhāragataṃ cittaṃ taṇhānaṃ khayamajjhagā.*[5]
>
> Through countless births I wandered in *saṃsāra*, seeking, but not finding, the builder of the house. I have been taking birth in misery again and again. O builder of the house you are now seen! You cannot build the house again. All the rafters and the central pole are shattered. The mind is free

from all the *saṅkhārā*. The craving-free stage is achieved.

After his enlightenment the Buddha spent several weeks enjoying *nibbānic* peace. At the end of this period Tapassu and Bhallika, two merchants of Ukkala offered him rice cakes and honey.[6] These two became the first lay disciples (*upāsakā*) taking refuge only in the Buddha and the Dhamma, as the Saṅgha had not yet come into being.

The Burmese tradition maintains that both these merchants were from Okkala, an ancient city near present day Rangoon. The Burmese take pride in the fact that the first people to give respect to the Buddha and the Dhamma were from Burma, and that the first food that the Buddha took after enlightenment was Burmese rice and honey.

With infinite compassion the Buddha decided to teach the profound Dhamma. His two previous teachers Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, who could both have understood the Dhamma, had passed away. So he decided to go to the Isipatana-migadāya at Sāranāth, the deer park near Vārāṇasī, to teach his five companions who had left him just before his enlightenment. It was on the full moon day of Āsāḷha (June-July) that the Buddha set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma by teaching the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*[7] explaining the middle path to them. They became his first five *bhikkhu* disciples and therefore the first members of the *Bhikkhu Saṅgha* (Order of Monks). This sermon was later followed by the *Anatta-lakkhaṇa Sutta*,[8] at the end of which all five became fully liberated (*arahant*) by the practice of Vipassana. They realised the truth of the impermanent, substanceless,

and unsatisfactory nature of reality (*anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*) at the experiential level.

Not long after this, Yasa, the depressed and mentally disturbed son of a wealthy merchant of Vārāṇasī who could not find peace in his riches and way of life, approached the Buddha and received ordination. He was followed by his fifty-four friends who also became monks. Having tasted Dhamma, they soon gained the peace which they sought and with continued practice they all attained the stage of *arahant*.[9] Yasa's father and mother became the first lay disciples to take refuge in the Triple Gem, since now there were three qualities in which to take refuge: the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha.

The next months were the rainy season and the Buddha spent them in retreat (*vassāvāsa*) at Sāranāth with the Saṅgha, which had grown to sixty *arahant bhikkhus*. As the rainy season ended he instructed them as follows :

> Wander forth, O monks, for the benefit of many, for the happiness of many. Shower compassion on the world for the good, benefit, and happiness of gods and men. Let no two go in the same direction.[10]

The Buddha sent these sixty *bhikkhus* to various places to teach the Dhamma. Because they had realised the truth of the path to liberation themselves, they became shining examples of what they taught. Their teaching did not consist of mere discourses, mere words. Their success lay in enabling the people to practise what was taught. The nature of the Dhamma is that it is beneficial in the beginning, beneficial in the middle, and beneficial in the end.[11] The results of the practice (*paṭipatti*) started to

manifest. People from different sects, castes, and classes were attracted. Leaders of various sects started practising the Dhamma. While the Buddha was on his way to Senānigāma at Uruvelā, the thirty Bhaddavaggiya received ordination. At Uruvelā, the three Kassapa brothers with their thousand followers became monks.[12] Also the two brāhmans Sāriputta and Moggallāna took ordination, and later became the chief disciples of the Buddha.[13]

Many other important people of that time also became attracted to pure Dhamma: the Kings Bimbisāra, Suddhodana, and Prasenajita; the wealthy merchants Anāthapiṇḍika, Jotiya, Jaṭila, Meṇḍaka, Puṇṇaka, and Kākavaliya; and important women such as Visākhā, Suppavāsā, and Khemā. They donated various monasteries to the Saṅgha with the wholesome volition that the Dhamma might spread throughout society. These facilities enabled people to learn and practise the Dhamma, and thereby come out of their suffering.

The Buddha spent his second, third, and fourth rainy seasons at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove donated by King Bimbisāra. The Buddha always remained at one place for the rains and moved around northern India teaching Dhamma during the rest of the year. One of these journeys was to Kapilavatthu at the invitation of King Suddhodana. The Buddha was received with honours by the native Sākyans. During this visit thousands of them joined the Saṅgha, including his son Rāhula and stepbrother Nanda. Others such as Anuruddha, Bhaddiya, Ānanda, Bhagu, Kimbila, Devadatta, and even the royal barber Upāli, also joined.

The fifth rainy season was spent in Vesāli. It was in that year that King Suddhodana, the Buddha's father, died. His widow, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, requested the Buddha to allow women to join the Saṅgha. Ānanda interceded on their behalf and their request was granted. This was the beginning of the Order of Nuns (*Bhikkhunī Saṅgha*).

The Buddha spent the next rains retreat at Maṅkulapabbata, and the seventh at Tāvatiṃsa preaching *Abhidhamma* (higher teachings) to Mahāmāyā and other devas.

Subsequently, the eighth to the nineteenth rains retreats were spent at the following places: Bhesakalāvana, Kosāmbī, Pārileyyaka Forest, the brāhman village of Ekanāḷā, Verañjā, Cālikapabbata, Jetavana in Sāvatthi, Kapilavatthu, Āḷavī, and Rājagaha.

In the twentieth year the Buddha transformed the life of the ferocious Aṅgulimāla who had earlier killed 999 people. Coming into contact with the Dhamma, Aṅgulimāla became a saintly person and later on became an *arahant*. The Buddha spent the twentieth retreat at Rājagaha.

From the twenty-first up to the forty-sixth, his final rains retreat, the Buddha spent his time at Sāvatthi in the Jetavana Vihāra and Pubbārāma Vihāra.

Throughout his life he continually faced opposition from those espousing old superstitions and beliefs based on birth, caste, class, animal sacrifice, etc. At times he faced great opposition from sectarians who tried to discredit him and his teaching by trying to create scandals. One monk, Devadatta, tried to create a schism in the

Saṅgha, and even tried to kill the Buddha by various means. In all instances the Buddha used his infinite wisdom, love, and compassion to overcome these opposing forces, and continued to serve more and more suffering beings.

At the age of eighty the Buddha visited Vesāli where the courtesan Ambapālī offered him a meal and made a gift of her Ambalaṭṭhikā Grove to the Saṅgha. Through the practice of Dhamma she came out of immorality, established herself in truth, and became an *arahant*. Later in the same year he visited Pāvā and stayed in the mango grove of Cunda. Here he took what was to be his last meal, and became ill. In this weakened condition he continued on to Kusinārā. There he instructed Ānanda to spread his upper robe between twin sāla trees, and informed him that the end of his life had come. A large number of monks, lay followers, and devas assembled around him to pay their last respects. The Buddha gave them his last admonition, known as *pacchimā-vācā*:

*Vaya-dhammā saṅkhārā,*
*appamādena sampādetha.*[14]

Decay is inherent in all compounded things,
work out your own salvation with diligence.

Thus teaching the Dhamma as he himself practised it, the Buddha attained *Mahāparinibbāna* in his eightieth year, on the full moon day of Vesākha in 544 B.C.

* * *

# *THE TEACHING OF THE BUDDHA*

The Buddha taught the middle path. In the first sermon known as the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*,[15] or the Turning of the Wheel of the Dhamma, the Buddha taught that seekers of truth must avoid two extremes—that of the path of sensual pleasure, and that of extreme penance or austerity. This middle path he explained by means of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

## The Four Noble Truths

1. There is suffering.
2. Suffering has a cause: craving.
3. If craving ceases, suffering ceases.
4. There is a path leading to the cessation of suffering.[16]

This path leading to the cessation of suffering is the Eightfold Path. It is divided into three divisions of *sīla*—moral living, *samādhi*—control of the mind, and *paññā*—total purification of the mind by wisdom and insight.

## The Eightfold Path

**Wisdom** (*Paññā*)

1. Right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*).
2. Right thought (*sammā-saṅkappo*).

**Moral Conduct** (*Sīla*)

3. Right speech (*sammā-vācā*).
4. Right action (*sammā-kammanto*).
5. Right livelihood (*sammā-ājīvo*).

**Control of Mind** (*Samādhi*)

6. Right effort (*sammā-vāyāmo*).
7. Right awareness (*sammā-sati*).
8. Right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*).

## The Law of Dependent Origination

The Buddha explained the working of the Four Noble Truths by means of the Law of Dependant Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).

"With ignorance and craving as our companions, we have been flowing in the stream of repeated existences from time immemorial. We come into existence and experience various types of miseries, die, and are reborn again and again without putting an end to this unbroken process of becoming."[17] The Buddha said that this is *saṃsāra*.

He further said: "Rightly understanding the perils of this process, realising fully 'craving' as its cause, becoming free from the past accumulations, and not creating new ones in the future, one should mindfully lead the life of

detachment."[18] One whose craving is uprooted finds his mind has become serene, and achieves a state where there is no becoming at all. This is the state of *nibbāna*, freedom from suffering.

A closer look at the workings of the Law of Dependent Origination will show clearly how this process of becoming can be stopped, and liberation realised.[19] There are twelve interconnected links in the circular chain of becoming:

- Dependent on ignorance (*avijjā*), reactions (*saṅkhārā*) arise,
- dependent on reactions, consciousness (*viññāṇa*) arises,
- dependent on consciousness, mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*) arise,
- dependent on mind and body, the six sense doors (*saḷāyatana*) arise,
- dependent on the six sense doors, contact (*phassa*) arises,
- dependent on contact, sensation (*vedanā*) arises,
- dependent on sensation, craving (*taṇhā*) arises,
- dependent on craving, clinging (*upādāna*) arises,
- dependent on clinging, becoming (*bhava*) arises,
- dependent on becoming, birth (*jāti*) arises,
- dependent on birth, decay and death (*jarā*, *maraṇa*) arise.

This shows that depending on one, there is the origin of the other. The former serves as the cause, and the latter results as the effect. This chain is the process responsible

for our misery. By the practice of Vipassana meditation this process can be stopped.

To break this unending chain of existences, the Buddha found by means of his own personal experience that suffering arises because of craving (*taṇhā*). Exploring the depths of his mind, he realised that between the external object and the mental reaction of craving there is a link—the body sensations (*vedanā*). Whenever one encounters an object through the five physical senses or the mind, a sensation arises in the body. And based on the sensation, craving arises. If the sensation is pleasant one craves to prolong it; if the sensation is unpleasant one craves to get rid of it. In the chain of Dependent Origination the Buddha expressed this discovery: dependent on contact sensation arises, dependent on sensation craving arises.[20] The immediate and actual cause for the arising of craving and of suffering is, therefore, not something outside of us but rather the sensations that occur within us. To free ourselves of craving and of suffering we must deal with this inner reality, that is, with sensations (*vedanā*). This was a unique contribution of the Buddha's teaching.

The habit of an untrained mind is to relish sensations, to generate craving with every sensation experienced. By learning to observe them, however, one comes to see that all sensations are impermanent and that any attachment to them causes suffering. Gradually one learns to refrain from reacting with craving towards the sensations by adopting the stance of an impartial observer, appreciating all sensations as manifestations of an essenceless, changing reality. In the process, the accumulated conditionings of

the mind (*saṅkhārā*) are gradually eradicated. The more one observes dispassionately, the more layers of past conditioning are eradicated until one reaches the stage where the mind is freed from the habit of reacting with craving. As a result, the process "dependent on sensation craving arises," changes into "dependent on sensation wisdom arises," and the vicious circle of misery is arrested. This gradual process of purification is Vipassana. The Buddha said, "I have shown a step-by-step extinguishing of mental conditioning."[21] Each step is taken by observing body sensations (*vedanā*). This is the path that leads to the final goal, a goal that all can attain through the practice of Vipassana meditation, the practical application of the middle way shown by the compassionate Buddha.

* * *

# *THE SIX COUNCILS*
# (*Dhamma-Saṅgītis*)

The six historical Councils, or *Dhamma-Saṅgītis*, were held for the purpose of compiling the words of the Buddha. These were called recitation councils, or *saṅgītis*, because the texts were recited sentence by sentence by an eminent Thera (elder monk), and chanted after him in chorus by the whole assembly. It was only on the basis of unanimous acceptance by the members of the assembly that the words were compiled. This collection of the Buddha's teaching is called the *Tipiṭaka*.[22]

There are two important aspects of the Dhamma—the theoretical, textual aspect (*pariyatti*), and the practical, applied aspect (*paṭipatti*). Basically the work of such recitations or councils is to preserve the *pariyatti* aspect of the Dhamma in its pristine purity. The means for preserving the *paṭipatti* aspect of the Dhamma is the actual practice of the Buddha's teaching, handed down from teacher to pupil.

The councils were necessary to preserve the words accurately because, until the Fourth Council, the words of

the Buddha were not written down but were only committed to memory. They also provided a forum for settling disputes in the Saṅgha and for maintaining the purity of the monastic discipline.

The following is a brief description of each of the six Councils:

**The First Council** (*Paṭhama-Dhamma Saṅgīti*) was held at Rājagaha under the patronage of King Ajātasattu in 544 B.C., after the *Mahāparinibbāna* of the Buddha. Mahākassapa Thera presided over the council, Upāli was the reciter for the Vinaya, and Ānanda was the reciter for the Dhamma. It consisted of five hundred *arahants* and continued for seven months.

**The Second Council** (*Dutiya-Dhamma Saṅgīti*) was held at Vesāli under the patronage of King Kālāsoka in 444 B.C., one hundred years after the First Council. It consisted of seven hundred monks and was presided over by Revata Thera.

**The Third Council** (*Tatiya-Dhamma Saṅgīti*) was held at Pāṭaliputta under the patronage of King Dhammāsoka (better known as King Asoka) in 326 B.C. Thera Moggaliputta Tissa presided over the council in which one thousand monks, well-versed in the word of the Buddha, participated for nine months. During this council an additional collection of the Buddha's words was compiled, the *Kathāvatthu*, and added to the *Tipiṭaka*. It was after the council that nine Theras were sent to various places for the spread of the Dhamma.

**The Fourth Council** (*Catuttha-Dhamma Saṅgīti*) was convened in Sri Lanka at the time of King Vaṭṭagāminī

Abhaya (29-17 B.C.). Five hundred learned monks participated in the council presided over by Mahā Thera Rakkhita. The entire Tipiṭaka and commentaries (*Aṭṭhakathās*) were recited and then committed to writing for the first time.[23]

**The Fifth Council** (*Pañcama-Dhamma Saṅgīti*) was held at Mandalay in Burma in 1871 A.D. under the patronage of King Min-Don-Min, with 2,400 learned monks participating. The council was presided over in turns by the Mahā Thera Venerable Jāgarābhivaṃsa, Venerable Narindabhidhaja and Venerable Sumaṅgala Sāmī. The recitation and inscription of the *Tipiṭaka* onto marble slabs continued for more than five months.

**The Sixth Council** (*Chaṭṭha-Dhamma Saṅgīti*) was convened by Prime Minister U Nu of Burma in May 1954, in Rangoon, with the collaboration and participation of learned monks from various countries of the world. Venerable Abhidhaja Mahāraṭṭha Guru Bhadanta Revata presided over the council and 2,500 learned monks from Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, and other countries, re-examined the text of the *Tipiṭaka*. The council completed its task on the full moon day of Vesākha in 1956, the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's *Mahāparinibbāna*.[24]

These six Councils, the first three in India, the fourth in Sri Lanka and the last two in Burma, served the valuable function of helping to maintain the purity of the Dhamma, which continues to flourish more than 2,500 years after its rediscovery by Gotama the Buddha.

* * *

# *THE SPREAD OF THE DHAMMA*

History shows that during the time of the Buddha, the Kings Bimbisāra, Suddhodana, and Prasenajita received great benefit from their practice of the Dhamma, and naturally wanted to share this benefit with others. They enthusiastically supported the dissemination of the Buddha's teaching in their respective kingdoms. Yet the fact remains that the Dhamma spread to the masses not only because of this royal patronage but because of the efficacy of the technique itself. This technique enables anyone who applies it to come out of misery by rooting out the mental impurities of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). A simple and universal technique, it can be practised by men and women from any class, any sect, any communal group, with the same results. Suffering is universal: unwanted things happen and desired things may or may not happen. A universal malady must have a universal remedy: Dhamma is this remedy. The Buddha compassionately and freely distributed the Dhamma throughout northern India,

attracting a large number of people in what was then called Majjhima Desa.

Similarly after the time of the Buddha, during the time of Emperor Asoka in the third century B.C., the Dhamma spread widely. Again this was mainly because of the practical, applied aspect of the teaching (*Dhamma paṭipatti*). Several Asokan rock edicts prove this fact. Asoka must have himself experienced the beneficial results of this technique, and he propagated the Dhamma with great zeal. It was out of the volition to serve others, which develops when the mind becomes purified, that he put forth so much effort to help his subjects in both the mundane as well as the supramundane spheres. On the Pillar Edict #7 he points out two reasons why he succeeded in this. One was the rule of law and order in his kingdom (*Dhammaniyamāni*), but he gave more emphasis to the second reason which was the practice of meditation (*nijhatiyā*), the practical aspect of the Dhamma. This shows that he appreciated the fact that the practice of the Dhamma is the main reason for its spread.

It was after the Third Council under Asoka's patronage that fully liberated *arahant* monks were sent out of northern India to nine different areas to make the Dhamma available to more people. These monks were called *Dhamma dūtas* (Dhamma messengers). They naturally gave emphasis to the practical aspect of the Dhamma by which they themselves had become free from mental impurities. Filled with love and compassion, they attracted large numbers of people to the path of liberation.

The following are the names of the elder monks (*Theras*) and the nine areas where they went to teach Dhamma:

- Majjhantika Thera: Kāsmira and Gandhāra (Kashmir, Afghanistan, Peshawar and Rawalapindi in northwest Pakistan)
- Mahādeva Thera: Mahisamaṇḍala (Mysore)
- Rakkhita Thera: Vanavāsī (North Kanārā in South India)
- Yonaka Dhammarakkhita Thera: Aparantaka (modern northern Gujarat Kathiavar, Kachcha and Sindh)
- Mahādhamma Rakkhita Thera: Mahāraṭṭha (parts of Maharashtra around the source of Godavari)
- Mahā Rakkhita Thera: Yonakaloka (ancient Greece)
- Majjhima Thera: Himavanta Padesa Bhāga (Himalayan region)
- Soṇa and Uttara Theras: Suvaṇṇa Bhūmi (Burma)
- Mahinda Thera and others: Tambapaṇṇidīpa (Sri Lanka)

Asoka also sent teachers to as far away as present day Syria and Egypt. He paved the way for coming generations to spread the sublime Dhamma to the entire world.

His lead was followed by King Kaniṣhka who sent teachers such as the Theras Kumārajīva and Bodhidhamma to Central Asia and China.

From there the Dhamma went to Korea in the early 4th century A.D., and then to Japan. In India, Dhamma Universities—Takkasilā, Nālandā, Vikkamasilā, and others—developed, flourished, and attracted learned people from as far away as China. Dhamma also spread throughout Southeast Asia. Large numbers of people started practising in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Tibet also received the Dhamma, through the service of Śāntirakshita, Padmasambhava, Atiśha, and Kamalaśhīla.

Today the technique which the Buddha taught 2,500 years ago is once again flourishing, and is giving the same results now as it did then. Thousands of people in India and in countries around the world are learning Vipassana. What is attracting so many different types of people to the Dhamma is the same as what attracted them 2,500 years ago: the very practical nature of the teaching which is vivid, tangible, wholesome, easily understood, giving benefit here and now, leading one step-by-step to the goal.

As many people start to practise Dhamma once again, we can begin to imagine what life in the time of the Buddha, and later in the time of Asoka, was like: a society full of peace and harmony as millions of people became established in love, compassion, and wisdom through the practice of Dhamma.

May all beings be happy. May peace and harmony prevail.

* * *

# *HISTORICAL PLACES OF THE BUDDHA*

At the time of his *Mahāparinibbāna*, the Buddha said, "Ānanda, there are four places for people who are confidently treading on the path of Dhamma to visit which may further inspire them in Dhamma."

These places are:

- **Lumbinī**, where Gotama the Buddha was born.
- **Bodhagayā**, where the Buddha experienced full enlightenment.
- **Sāranāth**, where the Buddha set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma.
- **Kusinārā** (Kuśhīnagar), where the Buddha attained final emancipation.

There are a number of other places strongly connected with the life of the Buddha or the spread of his teaching in the few centuries following his *Mahāparinibbāna*. Below is a brief description of the most important of these places.

- **Lumbinī:** This is the sacred place where the Buddha was born. It has been identified with the site of Rummindei in Nepal. Here there is an ancient shrine with an image representing his birth as Prince Siddhattha. At the site a pillar remains which is engraved with an inscription commemorating the Emperor Asoka's pilgrimage there in the twentieth year after his coronation. There are ruins of a number of monasteries from the time of Asoka.
- **Bodhagayā:** This is the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment. It is located six miles to the south of Gayā in Bihar. Shrines and stately monuments abound here. The Mahābodhi Temple is approximately 160 feet high. It enshrines a great gilded statue of the Buddha touching the earth, which symbolises the supreme event. To the west of the temple stands the Bodhi tree, and a red sandstone slab representing the *Vajrāsana* on which the Buddha is said to have sat when he reached full enlightenment. Emperor Asoka visited this place and described the visit in one of his rock edicts.
- **Sāranāth:** Inscriptions found here refer to the site as "the Monastery of the Turning of the Wheel of the Dhamma." Known as Deer Park during ancient times, this is where the Buddha gave his first discourse to his five former companions, and where all five eventually became fully liberated. The ruins of Sāranāth cover an extensive area. Emperor Asoka erected a series of monuments here, including the Dhamekh Stūpa which stood at a height of about 150 feet, the impressive ruins of which can still be

seen today. A place of modern interest is the Mūlagandhakuṭī Vihāra erected by the Mahābodhi Society. Relics discovered at Takkasilā, Nāgārjunakoṇḍā, and Mīrapura-khāsa are enshrined here. The Lion Capital, which originally surmounted an Asokan pillar and today is the symbol of the Indian nation, now occupies a place of honour in the Sāranāth Museum. Sāranāth is located about 10 km from Vārāṇasī in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

- **Kusinārā** (Kushīnagar)**:** Here between twin sāla trees the Buddha lay down and passed into *Mahāparinibbāna*. There is a large *cetiya* (*stūpa*) here which dates from the Gupta period. There are also ruins of many shrines and monasteries from ancient times. In recent times a shrine has been built to house a large recumbent figure of the Buddha depicting his *Mahāparinibbāna*. A large mound nearby, known as Ramabhar, is the place where a great *stūpa* stood marking the spot where the Buddha's remains were cremated and where the relics of the Buddha were divided into eight equal portions.
- **Sāvatthi** (Śhrāvasti)**:** This was one of the largest cities in India at the time of the Buddha, and today is the small village of Sahetha-Mahetha, about 150 km northwest of Kushīnagar in the state of Uttar Pradesh. It was here that the merchant Anāthapiṇḍika purchased Prince Jeta's grove for a fabulous price in gold, and constructed a large Dhamma centre capable of accommodating 10,000

people. The Buddha spent twenty-five rains retreats here, and today it contains the foundations of numerous shrines, *stūpas*, and monasteries from ancient times.

- **Rājagaha** (Rājagriha)**:** Modern Rājgirī in Bihar was once the capital of the powerful state of Magadha, and is closely associated with the life of the Buddha. The Bamboo Grove donated by King Bimbisāra is here, as well as Vultures Peak (Gijjhakūṭa), which was a place for retreat liked by the Buddha, near the city. This is the place where Devadatta, the Buddha's wicked cousin, made several attempts on his life. The First Dhamma Council was held here just after the *Mahāparinibbāna* of the Buddha.
- **Vesāli** (Vaiśhāli)**:** The city of Vesāli, today known as Basarh in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar, was once the capital of the powerful Licchavī clan. It was a stronghold of Dhamma from the early days. It was here that the Buddha announced his approaching *Mahāparinibbāna*. A little over one hundred years after the Buddha's passing, the Second Council was held here.
- **Saṅkassa** (Saṅkisā)**:** Saṅkassa, today known as Saṅkisā, in the Farukkhabad district of Uttar Pradesh, is the place where Buddha is said to have descended to earth from the Tāvatiṃsa deva world, where he went to teach Abhidhamma to his mother and other devas. There are ruins of many *stūpas* and monasteries here from ancient times.
- **Sāñcī** (Sānchī)**:** From the time of Emperor Asoka, Sāñcī, in Madhya Pradesh, became a major centre of

Dhamma activity. Today the great *stūpa*, measuring one hundred feet in diameter and fifty in height, still remains from that time. The four gateways are richly carved with bas-reliefs illustrating the Jātaka tales, and scenes from the Buddha's life. The relics of Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna, the two chief disciples of the Buddha, are enshrined here.

- **Nālandā:** The monastic establishments at Nālandā became famous in the centuries following the Buddha's passing away. The place was visited several times by the Buddha, and the monasteries date from the time of Asoka. Nālandā was a flourishing centre of learning, and for centuries was famous for its learned and versatile teachers. The ruins extend over a large area, consisting of sites of monasteries, *stūpas* and temples. In the museum nearby are deposited numerous sculptures and other antiquities recovered during excavations.

* * *

# *VIPASSANA MEDITATION*

Vipassana meditation is the personal purification of the mind. It is the highest form of awareness—the total perception of the mind-matter phenomena in its true nature. It is the choiceless observation of things as they are.

Vipassana is the meditation the Buddha practised after trying all other forms of bodily mortification and mind control and finding them inadequate to free him from the seemingly endless round of birth and death, pain and sorrow.

It is a technique so valuable that in Burma it was preserved in its pristine purity for more than 2,200 years.

Vipassana meditation has nothing to do with the development of supernormal, mystical, or special powers, even though they may be awakened. Nothing magical happens. The process of purification that occurs is simply an elimination of negativities, complexes, knots, and habits that have clouded pure consciousness and blocked the flow of mankind's highest qualities—pure love (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*),

and equanimity (*upekkhā*). There is no mysticism in Vipassana. It is a science of the mind that goes beyond psychology by not only understanding, but also purifying, the mental process.

The practice is an art of living which manifests its profound practical value in our lives—lessening and then eliminating the greed, anger, and ignorance that corrupt all relationships, from the family level to international politics. Vipassana spells an end to daydreaming, illusion, fantasy—the mirage of the apparent truth.

Like the sizzling explosion of cold water being thrown on a red-hot stove, the reactions after bringing the mind out of its hedonistic tendencies into the here and now are often dramatic and painful. Yet there is an equally profound feeling of release from tensions and complexes that have for so long held sway in the depths of the unconscious mind.

Through Vipassana anyone, irrespective of race, caste, or creed, can eliminate finally those tendencies that have woven so much anger, passion, and fear into our lives. During the training a student concentrates on only one task—the battle with his own ignorance. There is no guru worship or competition among students. The teacher is simply a well-wisher pointing the way he has charted through his own long practical experience.

With continuity of practice, the meditation will quiet the mind, increase concentration, arouse acute mindfulness, and open the mind to the supramundane consciousness—the "peace of *nibbāna* (freedom from all suffering) within."

As in the Buddha's enlightenment, a student simply goes deep inside himself, disintegrating the apparent reality until in the depths he can penetrate even beyond subatomic particles into the absolute.

There is no dependence on books, theories, or intellectual games in Vipassana. The truth of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and egolessness (*anattā*) are grasped directly with all the enormous power of the mind rather than the crutch of the intellect. The illusion of a "self," binding the mental and physical functions together, is gradually broken. The madness of cravings and aversions, the futile grasping of "I, me, mine," the endless chatter and conditioned thinking, the reaction of blind impulse—these gradually lose their strength. By his own efforts the student develops wisdom and purifies his mind.

The foundation of Vipassana meditation is *sīla*—moral conduct. The practice is strengthened through *samādhi*—concentration of the mind. And the purification of the mental processes is achieved through *paññā*—the wisdom of insight. We learn how to observe the interplay of the four physical elements within ourselves with perfect equanimity, and find how valuable this ability is in our daily lives.

We smile in good times, and are equally unperturbed when difficulties arise all around us, in the certain knowledge that we, like our troubles, are nothing but a flux, waves of becoming arising with incredible speed, only to pass away with equal rapidity.

Although Vipassana meditation was developed by the Buddha, its practice is not limited to Buddhists. There is

no question of conversion—the technique works on the simple basis that all human beings share the same problems, and a technique that can eradicate these problems will have a universal application.

Hindus, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, Roman Catholics, and other Christian sects have all practised Vipassana meditation, and have reported a dramatic lessening of those tensions and complexes that affect all mankind. There is a feeling of gratefulness to Gotama, the historical Buddha, who showed the way to the cessation of suffering, but there is absolutely no blind devotion.

The Buddha repeatedly discouraged any excessive veneration paid to him personally. He said, "What will it profit you to see this impure body? Who sees the teaching—the Dhamma—sees me."

## The Ten-day Course

Students wishing to learn Vipassana meditation undergo a minimum ten-day course, during which time they take precepts not to kill, not to steal, not to commit sexual misconduct, not to speak lies, and to refrain from intoxicants. For the entire ten days they live within the course site. Each day begins at 4:30 a.m. and continues until 9:00 p.m., with the student aiming for at least ten hours of meditation (with breaks). For three days the student develops concentration of the mind by observing the inhalation and exhalation of the breath (Anapana). During the ensuing days the student develops awareness and equanimity towards the various sensations experienced within the framework of the body and is shown how to penetrate his entire physical and mental

makeup with the clarity of insight (Vipassana). Each day's progress is explained during an hour-long discourse in the evening. The course closes on the last day with the practice of loving kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*), the sharing of the purity developed during the course with all beings.

The work of controlling and purifying the mind is given top priority during the course. The results are allowed to speak for themselves. Philosophical and speculative conversation is discouraged.

There is no charge whatsoever for the teachings. As for costs of board, lodging, and other minor expenses, these are met by the donations of grateful students of past courses who have experienced the benefits of Vipassana, and who wish to give others an opportunity to experience them. In turn, having completed a course, if one feels benefited by it and would like others also to benefit from the practice of Vipassana, he or she may give a donation for future courses.

The rate of progress of a student depends solely on his own *pāramīs* (previously acquired merits), and on the operation of five elements of effort—faith, health, sincerity, energy, and wisdom.

## The Teacher

S.N. Goenka was authorised to teach Vipassana meditation by the respected Vipassana teacher of Burma, Sayagyi U Ba Khin. Born in Burma of Indian heritage, and well established as a businessman and householder, Mr. Goenka did his first course under Sayagyi in 1955 at the International Meditation Centre in Rangoon.

In Vipassana, Mr. Goenka found an invaluable jewel—the jewel of the Dhamma—which dispels the darkness of ignorance. Here was a scientific method, a practical technique that eradicates suffering and purifies the mind. Fascinated by this universal remedy rediscovered by the Buddha, Mr. Goenka continued to practice (*paṭipatti*) and study the texts (*pariyatti*) for the next 14 years under the guidance of Sayagyi.

In 1969, Mr. Goenka was appointed by Sayagyi as an authorised teacher of Vipassana. That same year, Mr. Goenka left Burma (present-day Myanmar) for India and began conducting courses. Since then he has been giving hundreds of courses to people from different backgrounds and nationalities.

In nearly three decades of teaching, Mr. Goenka has helped establish the Vipassana International Academy, in Igatpuri, India—as well as more than 35 other centres in India and abroad—for the purpose of offering courses in *paṭipatti*, Vipassana meditation. He has also appointed several hundred assistant teachers to help conduct courses around the world. He and his assistants do not receive any remuneration whatsoever, and expenses for the courses and centres are met with voluntary donations from grateful students.

Mr. Goenka has also helped to establish the Vipassana Research Institute at Igatpuri, to help make the *pariyatti* teachings of the Buddha available to the public. The Institute is publishing the entire Pāli Tipiṭaka, along with its commentaries and sub-commentaries, in Devanāgari script. It is also producing this material in a multilingual CD-ROM with search facilities. In addition, the Institute

is exploring references to Vipassana in various ancient texts, and it is conducting scientific research on the present applications and benefits of Vipassana in different fields of human development.

With more and more people practising Vipassana, both the *paṭipatti* and *pariyatti* aspects of the Buddha's teaching are gaining prominence. Mr Goenka stresses the practical and non-sectarian nature of the teaching and its relevance to householders as well as renunciates. He emphasises that Vipassana meditation does not encourage people to withdraw from society, but rather teaches them to face the ups and downs of life in a calm and balanced way.

* * *

# *THE TEACHING TODAY*

The teaching of Gotama the Buddha is once again flourishing in India and many parts of the world. For 2,200 years it was preserved by a chain of teachers in Burma in the monastic tradition. There the late Venerable Ledi Sayadaw learned Vipassana, and reintroduced the technique to the lay people. He taught Saya Thetgyi, a layman, who in turn taught Sayagyi U Ba Khin. It was Sayagyi U Ba Khin's wish that the technique, long lost to India, could again return to its country of origin and from there spread around the world. He authorised his student, S. N. Goenka, to teach Vipassana meditation, and in 1969 Mr. Goenka came to India and began conducting Vipassana courses in India and abroad. Thus after centuries of being lost to many places, the teaching of the Buddha has once again become available to people around the world.

Today people of different backgrounds, communities, and occupations are deriving real benefit from the technique of Vipassana. Executives, labourers, college students, doctors and farmers are applying the technique and gaining strength, pragmatism, and balance of mind in

their professional and personal lives. Successful experiments in different social sectors and institutions offer a broad scope for applying the technique. Courses for prisoners within jails have proven to be effective in reforming inmates and giving them a genuine tool for a better life. Jail and police officers have equally benefited from the technique. Institutions for leprosy patients, drug addicts, college students, and priests are offering courses within their compounds. Children are able to learn the preliminary steps of morality and concentration, and this gives them a healthy orientation in their social development, academic performance, and emotional stability.

The technique of Vipassana meditation is universal, non-sectarian, practical, and result-oriented. People from different religious backgrounds, communities, professions, financial status, and walks of life are making use of it to purify their minds and live wholesome lives. The application of the Buddha's teachings are as relevant today as they were 2,500 years ago.

May the teachings of Gotama the Buddha be maintained in their pristine purity, and may they serve more and more people to walk the path of Dhamma and reach the final goal of full liberation.

May all beings be happy, be peaceful, be liberated.

* * *

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22. According to the Theravada tradition *Buddhavacana* (the words of the Buddha) are contained in the *Tipiṭaka* (in Pāli), or the three baskets, which consists of:

 i) *Vinaya Piṭaka*, which contains rules and regulations pertaining to monks and nuns.

 ii) *Sutta Piṭaka*, which contains the popular discourses on Dhamma which the Buddha gave during his forty-five years of teaching.

 iii) *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, which contains teachings of the Buddha analysed and synthesized in a special format. They are all available in Pāli language.

23. According to the Mahāyāna tradition the Fourth Council was held under the auspices of Kaniṣhka in India about 100 A.D.

24. 2,500 years of Buddhism, edited by Prof. P.V. Bapat, p. 47

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2478-3311; Mobile: 94440-21622; Website: www.setu.dhamma.org City Off. Meridian Apparels Limited, Meridian House 121/3, T.T.K. Road, Manickam Avenue, Chennai 600 018. Tel: (044) 24994646, 52111000; Fax: (044) 2499 4477, 5211 1777; **Contact:** S. K. Goenka, No. 2, Seethammal Road, Alwarpet, Chennai-600018. Tel: (044) 4201 1188, 4217 7200; Fax: 5201 1177; Mobile: 98407-55555; Email: info@setu.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Paphulla, Bangalore Vipassana Centre**, (23 km from City Raiway station,) Alur Village, Near Alur Panchayat office, Off Tumkur Road, Dasanapura Bangalore North Taluka 562 123. Tel: (080) 2371-2377, 23717106. 91-97395-91580, (10 am to 6 pm) 92423-57424 (9am-2pm, 4pm-6pm) and 93435-45388 (11 am to 3 pm) [Bus No. 256, 258, 258C from Majestic Bus Stand Gat down Makali (Near Himalaya Drugs), cross road and take auto] Email: info@paphulla.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Nijjhāna, VIMC,** Indur, Post Pocharam, Yedpalli Mandal, Pin-503 186, Dist. Nizamabad, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: (08467) 316 663; Mobile: 9989923133; Email: info@nijjhana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Vijaya, VIMC,** Vijayarayai, Pedavegi Mandal (Post), Pin-534475, Dist. West Godavari. Tel: (08812) 225 522 [15 kms. from Eluru on Eluru-Chintalapudi Road]

**Dhamma Nāgajjuna, VIMC,** Hill Colony, Nagarjun Sagar, Nalgonda 502 802, Andhra Pradesh, Tel: 277-999 Mobile: 94401-39329; Email: info@nagajjuna.dhamma.org

**Dhammārāma, VIMC,** Kumudavalli Village, (near Bhimavaram) Mandal-Pala Koderu 534 210, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh (1.5 kms from Bhimavaram, on the Bhimavaram-Thanuku Road) Tel: (08816) 236 566; Mobile: 99893-82887; Email: info@rama.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Koṇḍañña, Vipassana International Meditation Centre,** Kondapur, Via Sagareddy, Medak 502306. Mobile: 93920-93799. Email: info@kondanna.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Ketana, Vipassana Meditation Centre,** Mampra P. O. Kodukulanji (via) Chengannur, (8 kms from Chengannur Railway station), Alleppey District, Kerala, 689 508 Tel: (0479) 235-1616; Website: www.ketana.dhamma.org Email: info@ketana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Madhurā, Vipassana Meditation Centre,** Dindigal Dist, Gandhigram P. O. Chettiyapatti (gramam) www.setu.dhamma.org **City Office:** Renuka Mehta, 19A, Krishnapuram Colony, S.F/6, Nalligai Appartment, Madurai-625014. Mobile: 09443728116, **Contact:** Lalji Vora, Mob: 09843052465 Email: dhammamadhura@gmail.com

## Nepal

**Dharmashringa, Nepal Vipassana Centre,** PO. Box No. 12896, Budhanilkanth, Muhan Pokhari, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: [977] (01) 4371 655, 4371 007, **City Office:** Jyoti Bhawan, Kantipath, GPO Box 133 Kathmandu Tel: [977] (01) 4250 581, 4225 490; Fax: 4224 720, 4226 314; Website: www.np.dhamma.org Email: info@shringa.dhamma.org;

**Dhamma Tarāi, Birganj Vipassana Centre,** Parwanipur Parsa, Nepal, Tel: [977] (51) 621 115 **City office:** Sandip Building, Adarsha Nagar, Birganj, P.O. Box No.32, Tel:[977] (51) 521884; Fax: [977] (51) 580465; Mobile: 98042-44576 Email: info@tarai.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Jananī, Lumbini Vipassana Centre,** Near Lumbini Peace Flame, Rupandehi, Lumbini Zone, Nepal. Tel: [977] (071) 580 282 **Contact:** Mr. Gopal Bahadur Pokharel, Bairav Color Lab, Butwal, Khasyauli, Lumbini Zone, Nepal. Tel: (071) 541 549; Mobile: [977] 98570-20149 Email: info@janani.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Birāṭa, Purwanchal Vipassana Centre,** Phulbari Tole, South of Bus Park, Ithari-7, Sunsari, Nepal Tel: [977] (25) 585 521, **Contacts:** 1. (Biratnagar) Mr. Dev Kishan Mundada, Debanara, Goswara Road, Ward No. 9, Biratnagar, Nepal Tel: Off. [977] (21) 525486, Res. 527671; Fax: [977] (21) 526466; Email: info@birata.dhamma.org 2. (Dharan) Mr. Kamal Kumar Goyal, Tel: Off. [977] (25) 523528, Res 526829 Email: info@birata.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Citavana, Chitwan Vipassana Centre,** Mangalpur VDC Ward No 8, next to Bijaya Nagar Bazar, Chitwan, Nepal City office: Buddha Vihar, Narayanghat **Contacts:** (Narayanghat) 1. Mr. Hari Krishna Maharjan, Tel [977] (56) 520294, 528294; 2. Mr. Pancha Ram Pradhan, Tel [977] (56) 520228 Email: info@citavana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Kitti, Kirtipur Vipassana centre,** Devdhoka, Kirtipur, Nepal **Contact:** Ramsurbir Maharjan, Samal Tole, Ward No.6, Kirtipur, Nepal

**Dhamma Pokharā, Pokhara Vipassana Centre,** Pachbhaiya, Lekhnath Municipality, Pokhara, Kaski, Nepal **Contact:** Mr. Nara Gurung, Tel: [ 977] ( 061) 691972; Mobile: 98462-32383; 98412-55688; Email: info@pokhara.dhamma.org

## Cambodia

**Dhamma Laṭṭhikā, Battambang Vipassana Centre,** Trungmorn Mountain, National Route 10, District Phnom Sampeau, Battambang, Cambodia **Contact:** Phnom-Penh office: Mrs. Nary POC, Street 350, #35, Beng Keng Kang III, Khan Chamkar Morn, Phnom-Penh,

Cambodia. P.O. Box 1014 Phnom-Penh, Cambodia Tel. [855] (012) 689 732; poc_nary@hotmail.com; **Local Contact:** Off: Tel: [855] (536) 488 588, 2. Mr. Sochet Kuoch, Tel: [855] (092) 931 647, [855] (012) 995 269 Email: mientan2000@yahoo.co.uk and ms_apsara@yahoo.com

### Hong Kong

**Dhamma Muttā,** G.P.O. Box 5185, Hong Kong Tel: 852-2671 7031; Fax: 852-8147 3312 Email: info@hk.dhamma.org

### Indonesia

**Dhamma Jāvā,** Jl. H. Achmad No.99; Kampung Bojong, Gunung Geulis, Kecamatan Sukaraja, Cisarua-Bogor, Indonesia. Tel: [62] (0251) 827-1008; Fax: [62] (021) 581-6663; Website: www.java.dhamma.org **Course Registration Office Address:** IVMF ( Indonesia Vipassana Meditation Foundation ), Jl. Tanjung Duren Barat I, No. 27 A, Lt. 4, Jakarta Barat, Indonesia Tel : [62] ( 021 ) 7066 3290 (7am to 10pm); Fax: [62] ( 021 ) 4585 7618 Email: info@java.dhamma.org

### Iran

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### Israel

**Dhamma Pamoda,** Kibbutz Deganya-B, Jordan Valley, Israel **City Contact:** Israel Vipassana Trust, P.O. Box 75, Ramat-Gan 52100, Israel Website: www.il.dhamma.org/os/Vipassana-centre-eng.asp Email: info@il.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Korea,** Choongbook, Korea. Dabo Temple, 17-1, samsong-ri, cheongcheon-myun, gwaesan-koon, choongbook, Korea. Tel: +82-010-8912-3566, +82-010-3044-8396 Website: www.kr.dhamma.org Email: dhammakor@gmail.com

### Japan,

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**Dhammādicca,** 782-1 Kaminogo, Mutsuzawa-machi, Chosei-gun, Chiba, Japan 299 4413. Tel: [81] (475) 403 611. Website: www.adicca.dhamma.org

### Malaysia

**Dhamma Malaya, Malaysia Vipassana Centre, Centre Address:** Gambang Plantation, opp. Univ. M.P. Lebuhraya MEC, Gambang, Pahang, Malaysia **Office Address:** No., 30B, Jalan SM12, Taman Sri Manja, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. Tel: [60] (16) 341 4776 (English Enquiry) Tel: [60] (12) 339 0089 (Mandarin Enquiry) Fax: [60] (3) 7785 1218; Website: www.malaya.dhamma.org Email: info@malaya.dhamma.org

### Mongolia

**Dhamma Mahāna, Vipassana center trust of Mongolia.** Eronkhy said Amaryn Gudamj, Soyolyn Tov Orgoo, 9th floor, Suite 909, Mongolia Tel: [976] 9191 5892, 9909 9374; **Contact:** Central Post Office, P. O. Box 2146 Ulaanbaatar 211213, Mongolia Email: info@mahana.dhamma.org

### Myanmar

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**Dhamma Ratana,** Oak Pho Monastery, Myoma Quarter, Mogok, Myanmar **Contact:** Dr. Myo Aung, Shansu Quarter, Mogok. Mobile: [95] (09) 6970 840, 9031 861;

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**Dhamma Makuṭa,** Mindadar Quarter, Mogok.Mandalay Division, Myanmar. Tel: [95] (09) 80-31861. Email: info@joti.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Manorama,** Main road to Maubin University, Maubin, Myanmar. Tel: **Contact:** U Hla Myint Tin, Headmaster, State High School, Maubin, Myanmar. Tel: [95] (045) 30470

**Dhamma Mahimā,** Yechan Oo Village, Mandalay-Lashio Road, Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay Division, Myanmar. Tel: [95] (085) 21501. Email: info@mandala.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Manohara,** Aung Tha Ya Qr, Thanbyu-Za Yet, Mon State **Contact:** Daw Khin Kyu Kyu Khine, No.64 Aungsan Road, Set-Thit Qr, Thanbyu-Zayet, Mon State, Myanmar. Tel: [95] (057) 25607

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**Dhamma Ñāṇadhaja,** Shwe Taung Oo Hill, Yin Ma Bin Township, Monywa District, Sagaing Division, Myanmar **Contact:** Dhamma Joti Vipassana Centre

**Dhamma Lābha,** Lasho, Myanmar

**Dhamma Magga,** Near Yangon, Off Yangon Pegu Highway, Myanmar

**Dhamma Mahāpabbata,** Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar

**Dhamma Cetiya Paṭṭhāra,** Kaytho, Myanmar

**Dhamma Myuradipa,** Irrawadi Division, Myanmar

**Dhamma Pabbata,** Muse, Myanmar

**Dhamma Hita Sukha Geha,** Insein Central Jail, Yangon, Myanmar

**Dhamma Hita Sukha Geha-2,** Central Jail Tharawaddy, Myanmar

**Dhamma Rakkhita,** Thayawaddi Prison, Bago, Myanmar

**Dhamma Vimutti,** Mandalay, Myanmar

### Philippines

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### Sri Lanka

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**Dhamma Sobhā, Vipassana Meditation Centre** Balika Vidyala Road, Pahala Kosgama, Kosgama, Sri Lanka Tel: [94] (36) 225-3955 Email: dhammasobhavmc@gmail.com

**Dhamma Anurādha,** Ichchankulama Wewa Road, Kalattewa, Kurundankulama, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. Tel: [94] (25) 222-6959; **Contact:** Mr. D.H. Henry, Opposite School, Wannithammannawa, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. Tel: [94] (25) 222-1887; Mobile. [94] (71) 418-2094. Website: www.anuradha.dhamma.org Email: info@anuradha.dhamma.org

### Taiwan

**Dhammodaya,** No. 35, Lane 280, C hung-Ho Street, Section 2, Ta-Nan, Hsin She, Taichung 426, P. O Box No. 21, Taiwan Tel: [886] (4) 581 4265, 582 3932; Website: www.udaya.dhamma.org Email: dhammodaya@gmail.com

**Dhamma Vikāsa, Taiwan Vipassana Centre** - Dhamma Vikasa No. 1-1, Lane 100, Dingnong Road Laonong Village Liouguei Township Kaohsiung County Taiwan Republic of China Tel: [886] 7-688 1878 Fax: [886] 7-688 1879 Email: info@vikasa.dhamma.org

### Thailand,

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**Dhamma Ābhā,** 138 Ban Huay Plu, Tambon Kaengsobha, Wangton District, Pitsanulok Province, 65220, Thailand Tel : [66] (81) 605-5576, [66] (86) 928-6077; Fax : [66] (55) 268 049; Website: http://www.abha.dhamma.org/ Email: info@abha.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Suvaṇṇa,** 112 Moo 1, Tambon Kong, Nongrua District, Khonkaen Province, 40240, Thailand Tel [66] (08) 9186-4499, [66] (08) 6233-4256; Fax [66] (043) 242-288; Website: http://www.suvanna.dhamma.org/ Email: info@suvanna.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Kañcana,** Mooban Wang Kayai, Tambon Prangpley, Sangklaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand Tel. [66] (08) 5046-3111 Fax [66](02) 993-2700 Email: info@kancana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Dhānī,** 42/660 KC Garden Home Housing Estate, Nimit Mai Road, East Samwa Sub-district, Klongsamwa District, Bangkok 10510, Thailand Tel. [66] (02) 993-2711 Fax [66] (02) 993-2700 Email: info@dhani.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Sīmanta,** Chiengmai, Thailand **Contact:** Mr. Vitcha Klinpratoom, 67/86, Paholyotin 69, Anusaowaree, Bangkhen, BKK 10220 Thailand Tel: [66] (81) 645 7896; Fax: [66] (2) 279 2968; Email: vitchcha@yahoo.com Email: info@simanta.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Porāṇo:** A meditator has donated six acres of land near Nakorn Sri Dhammaraj (the name of the city), an important and ancient sea-port.

**Dhamma Puneti,** Udon Province, Thailand

**Dhamma Canda Pabhā,** Chantaburi, an eastern town about 245 kilometres from Bangkok

### Australia & New Zealand,

**Dhamma Bhūmi, Vipassana Centre,** P. O. Box 103, Blackheath, NSW 2785, Australia Tel: [61] (02) 4787 7436; Fax: [61] (02) 4787 7221 Website: www.bhumi.dhamma.org Email: info@bhumi.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Rasmi, Vipassana Centre Queensland,** P. O. Box 119, Rules Road, Pomona, Qld 4568, Australia Tel: [61] (07) 5485 2452; Fax: [61] (07) 5485 2907 Website: www.rasmi.dhamma.org Email: info@rasmi.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Pabhā, Vipassana Centre Tasmania,** GPO Box 6, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia Tel: [61] (03) 6263 6785; Website: www.pabha.dhamma.org Course registration & information: [61] (03) 6228-6535 or (03) 6266-4343 Email: info@pabha.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Āloka,** P. O. Box 11, Woori Yallock, VIC 3139, Australia Tel: [61] (03) 5961 5722; Fax: [61] (03) 5961 5765 Website: www.aloka.dhamma.org Email: info@aloka.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Ujjala,** Mail to: PO Box 10292, BC Gouger Street, Adelaide SA 5000, [Lot 52, Emu Flat Road, Clare SA 5453, Australia] **Tel Contact:** Anne Blizzard [61] (0)8 8278 8278; Email: info@ujjala.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Padīpa,** Vipassana Foundation of WA, Australia, Website: www.dhamma.org.au **Contact:** Andrew Parry C/- 13 Goldsmith Road, Claremont, WA 6010, Australia. Tel: [61]-(8)-9388 9151. Email: andparry@optusnet.com.au Email: info@padipa.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Medinī,** 153 Burnside Road, RD3 Kaukapakapa, Rodney District, New Zealand Tel: [64] (09) 420 5319; Fax: [64] (09) 420 5320; Website: www.medini.dhamma.org Email: info@medini.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Passaddhi,** Northern Rivers region, New South Wales Email: info@passaddhi.dhamma.org

### Europe,

**Dhamma Dīpa,** Harewood End, Herefordshire, HR2 8JS, UK Tel: [44] (01989) 730 234; male AT bungalow: [44] (01989) 730 204; female AT bungalow: [44] (01989) 731 024; Fax: [44] (01989) 730 450; Website: www.dipa.dhamma.org Email: info@dipa.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Padhāna, European Long-Course Centre,** Harewood End, Herefordshire, HR2 8JS, UK Website: www.eu.region.dhamma.org/os username <oldstudent> password <behappy> Email: info@padhana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Dvāra,** Vipassana Zentrum, Alte Strasse 6, 08606 Triebel, Germany Tel: [49] (37434) 79770; Website: www.dvara.dhamma.org Email: info@dvara.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Mahī, France Vipassana Centre,** Le Bois Planté, Louesme, F-89350 Champignelles, France. Tel: [33] (0386) 457 514; Fax [33] (0386) 457 620; Website: www.mahi.dhamma.org Email: info@mahi.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Nilaya,,** 6, Chemin de la Moinerie, 77120, Saints, France Tel/Fax: [33] 1 6475 1370; Mobile: 0609899079 Email: vcjuly2001@orange.fr

**Dhamma Aṭala, Vipassana Centre,** SP29, Lutirano 15 50034 Lutirano (Fi) Italy Tel: Off. [39] (055) 804 818; Website: www.atala.dhamma.org Email: info@atala.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Sumeru,** Centre Vipassana, No. 140, Ch-2610 Mont-Soleil, Switzerland Tel: [41] (32) 941 1670; Website: www.sumeru.dhamma.org Email: info@sumeru.dhamma.org Registration office: registration@sumeru.dhamma.org

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**Dhamma Pajjota,** Dhamma Pajjota, Belgium, Light (or Torch) of Dhamma, Vipassana Centrum, Driepaal 3, 3650 Dilsen-Stokkem, Belgium. Tel: [32] (0) 89 518 230; Website: www.pajjota.dhamma.org Email: info@pajjota.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Sobhana,** Lyckebygården, S-599 93 Ödeshög, Sweden. Tel: [46] (143) 211 36; Website: www.sobhana.dhamma.org Email: info@sobhana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Pallava,** Vipassana Poland **Contact:** Malgorzata Myc 02-798 Warszawa, Ekologiczna 8 m.79 Poland Tel: [48](22) 408 22 48 Mobile: [48] 505-830-915 Email: info@pl.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Sukhakari,** East Anglia (UK)

### North America

**Dhamma Dharā,** VMC, 386 Colrain-Shelburne Road, Shelburne MA 01370-9672, USA Tel: [1] (413) 625 2160; Fax: [1] (413) 625 2170; Website: www.dhara.dhamma.org Email: info@dhara.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Kuñja, Northwest Vipassana Center,** 445 Gore Road, Onalaska, WA 98570, USA Tel/Fax: [1] (360) 978 5434, Reg Fax: [1] (360) 242-5988; Website: www.kunja.dhamma.org Email: info@kunja.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Mahāvana, California Vipassana Center** 58503 Road 225, North Fork, California, 93643 Mailing address: P. O. Box 1167, North Fork, CA 93643, USA Tel: [1] (559) 877 4386; Fax [1] (559) 877 4387; Website: www.mahavana.dhamma.org Email: info@mahavana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Sirī, Southwest Vipassana Center,** 10850 County Road 155 A Kaufman, TX 75142, USA Mailing address: P. O. Box 7659, Dallas, TX 75209, USA Tel: [1] (972) 962-8858; Fax: [1] (972) 346-8020 (registration); [1] (972) 932-7868 (center); Website: www.siri.dhamma.org Email: info@siri.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Surabhi, Vipassana Meditation Center,** P. O. Box 699, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8, Canada Tel: [1] (250) 378 4506; Website: www.surabhi.dhamma.org Email: info@surabhi.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Maṇḍa, Northern California Vipassana Center,** Mailing address: P. O. Box 265, Cobb, Ca 95426, USA Physical address: 10343 Highway 175, Kelseyville, CA 95451, USA Tel: [1] (707) 928-9981; Website: www.manda.dhamma.org Email: info@manda.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Suttama, Vipassana Meditation Centre 810,** Côte Azélie, Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours, Montebello, (Québec), J0V 1L0, Canada Tél. 1-819-423-1411, Fax. 1- 819- 423- 1312 Website: www.suttama.dhamma.org Email: info@suttama.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Pakāsa, Illinois Vipassana Meditation Center**, 10076 Fish Hatchery Road, Pecatonica, IL 61063, USA Tel: [1] (815) 489-0420; Fax [1] (360) 283-7068 Website: www.pakasa.dhamma.org Email: info@pakasa.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Toraṇa, Ontario Vipassana Centre,** 6486 Simcoe County Road 56, Egbert, Ontario, L0L 1N0 Canada Tel: [1] (705) 434 9850; Website: www.torana.dhamma.org Email: info@torana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Vaddhana, Southern California Vipassana Center,** P.O. Box 486, Joshua Tree, CA 92252, USA. Tel: [1] (760) 362-4615;; Website: www.vaddhana.dhamma.org Email: info@vaddhana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Patāpa, Southeast Vipassana Trust,** Jessup, Georgia, South East USA Website: www.patapa.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Modana,** Canada Tel: [1] (250) 483-7522; Website: www.modana.dhamma.org Email: info@modana.dhamma.org

**Dhamma Karunā,** Alberta Vipassana Foundation Tel: [1](403) 283-1889 Fax: [1](403) 206-7453 Email: registration@ab.ca.dhamma.org

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*Acharaya Shri S. N. Goenka & Smt. Illaichidevi Goenka*

Sri Satyanarayanji Goenka was born in Mandalay, Myanmar in 1924. Although he topped the list of all successful candidates in the whole of Myanmar in the tenth class he could not continue his studies further because of financial constraints of his family. At a very early age he set up many commercial and industrial institutions and earned fabulous wealth. He also established many social and cultural centres. Because of tension he became a victim of migraine, which could not be cured by doctors of Myanmar and of other countries in the world. Then some one suggested him to take a course of Vipassana. Vipassana has done well not only to him but it has also been benefiting many others.

He learned Vipassana from Sayagyi U Ba Khin in 1955. Sitting at the feet of his teacher he practiced it for fourteen years He also studied the words of the Buddha during this period. He came to India in 1969 and conducted the first vipassana course in Mumbai. After that a series of courses were held. In 1976 the first residential course of vipassana was held in Igatpuri and the first centre of vipassana was established here. Up till now 167 centres have been established all over the world. New centres also are coming up. At these centres 1200 trained teachers teach vipassana in 59 languages of the world. Not only ten- day courses are conducted at these centres but also at some centres 20-day, 30-day, 45-day and 60-day courses are conducted. All courses are free of charge. The expenses on food and accommodation etc are met by the self-willed Dana given by those who benefited from the course. Seeing its benevolent nature vipassana courses are held not only for the inmates of jails and school children in the world but also for police personnels, judges, government officers etc.

ISBN 978-81-7414-128-6
VRI - E07